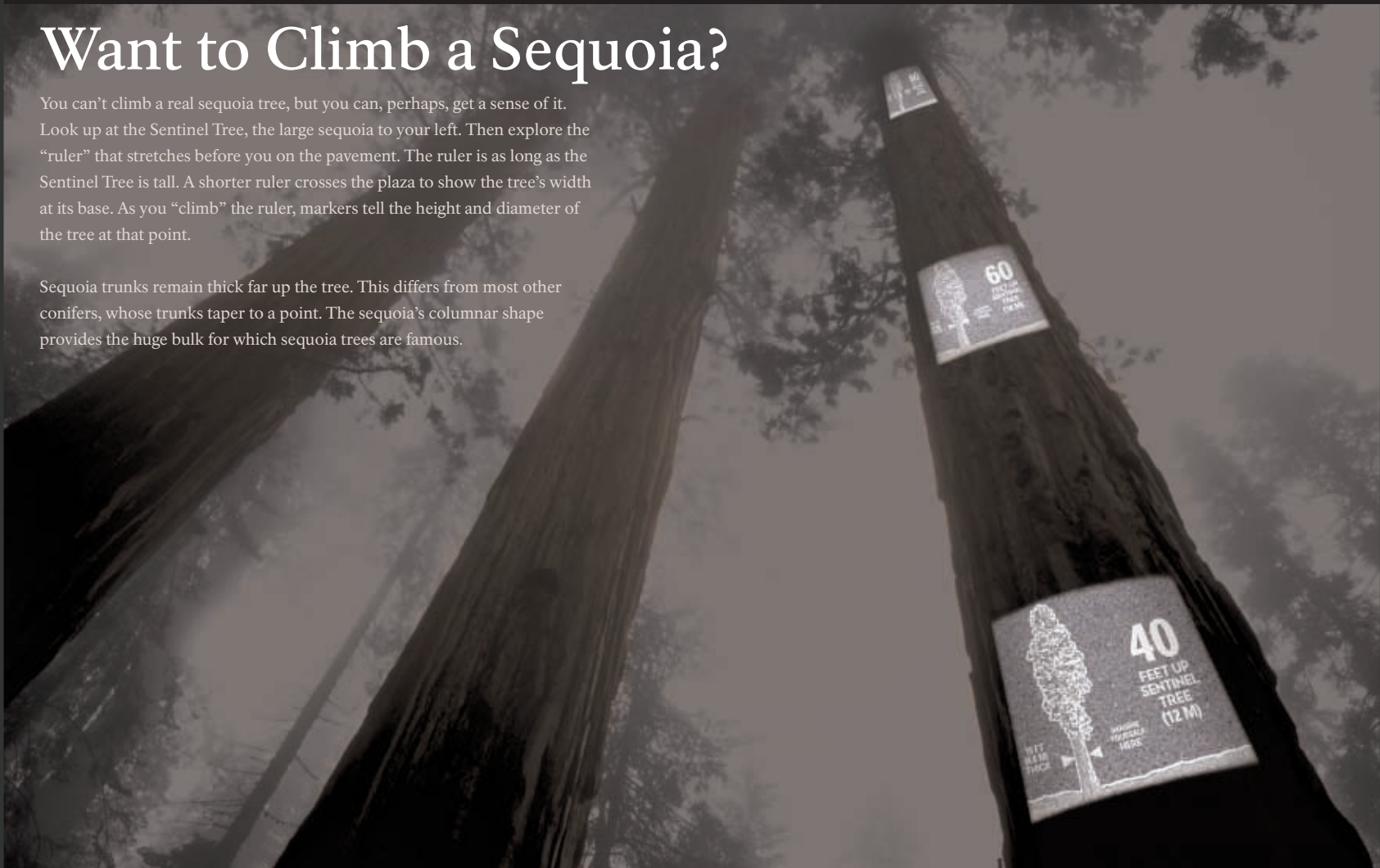




Want to Climb a Sequoia?

You can't climb a real sequoia tree, but you can, perhaps, get a sense of it. Look up at the Sentinel Tree, the large sequoia to your left. Then explore the "ruler" that stretches before you on the pavement. The ruler is as long as the Sentinel Tree is tall. A shorter ruler crosses the plaza to show the tree's width at its base. As you "climb" the ruler, markers tell the height and diameter of the tree at that point.

Sequoia trunks remain thick far up the tree. This differs from most other conifers, whose trunks taper to a point. The sequoia's columnar shape provides the huge bulk for which sequoia trees are famous.

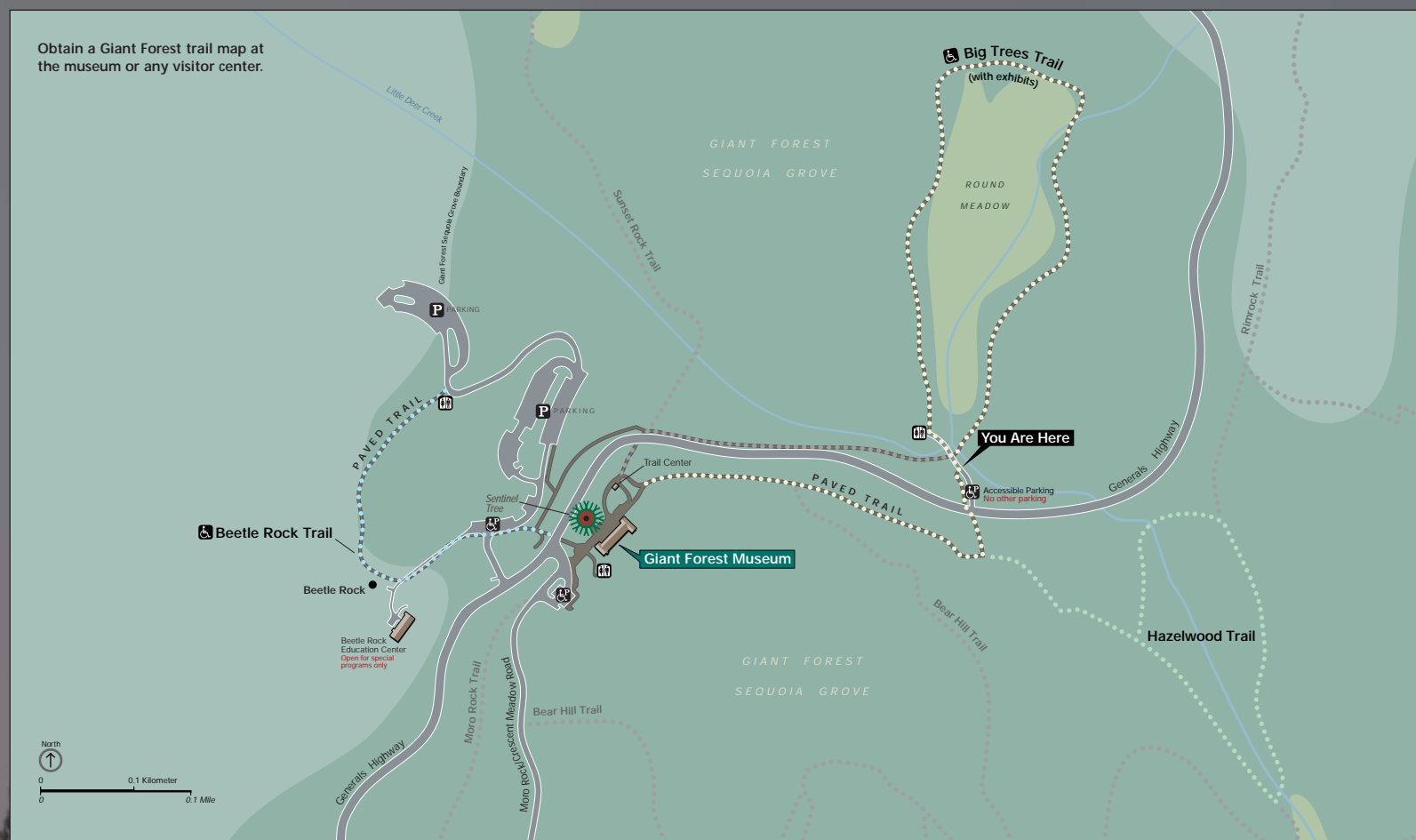




Giant Forest Museum Area

Getting to know sequoias takes two things: learning about them and experiencing them firsthand. Explore the museum's indoor exhibits, but then leave the walls behind.

Take a walk through the sequoia's world. If you plan to explore, be sure to purchase a map in the museum or at any visitor center.



Area Trails

	Big Trees Trail	1.25 miles (2 km)	1.5 hrs
	Beetle Rock	0.5 miles (804 m)	15 min
	Hazelwood Trail	1.5 miles (2.4 km)	1.0 hrs
	Other Trails		

Trail distance is round-trip.

Accessibility

Beetle Rock Trail

This paved trail has a moderate grade. Only vehicles with accessibility permits may use the small parking area near the beginning of the trail.

Big Trees Trail

The Big Trees Trail is paved. From the museum down to the Generals Highway, it has a moderate grade. Around Round Meadow the trail is flat.

Only vehicles with accessibility permits may use the small parking area at Round Meadow.

Hazelwood Trail

The Hazelwood Trail is unpaved with uneven surfaces. It is relatively flat, but has a short incline at the beginning of the trail.

Other Trails

There is great variability among the trails in Giant Forest. Some other trails might be accessible depending on your ability.

Safety

All natural areas pose risks.

You are responsible for your own safety.

Watch for uneven or slippery footing.

Be very cautious around steep dropoffs and wet areas.

Be careful when crossing roads.

Don't walk in roadways. Use the trails.

Be aware of what's around you and overhead.

Tree limbs can fall without warning.

Don't overexert yourself.

At this elevation of 6,400 feet (1950 m), activities take extra effort.

Do not feed nor approach wildlife.

Some Things to Do Here



Enjoy exhibits at the Giant Forest Museum and get answers to your questions about sequoia trees.



At Beetle Rock look west toward the Coast Range and learn about local air quality.



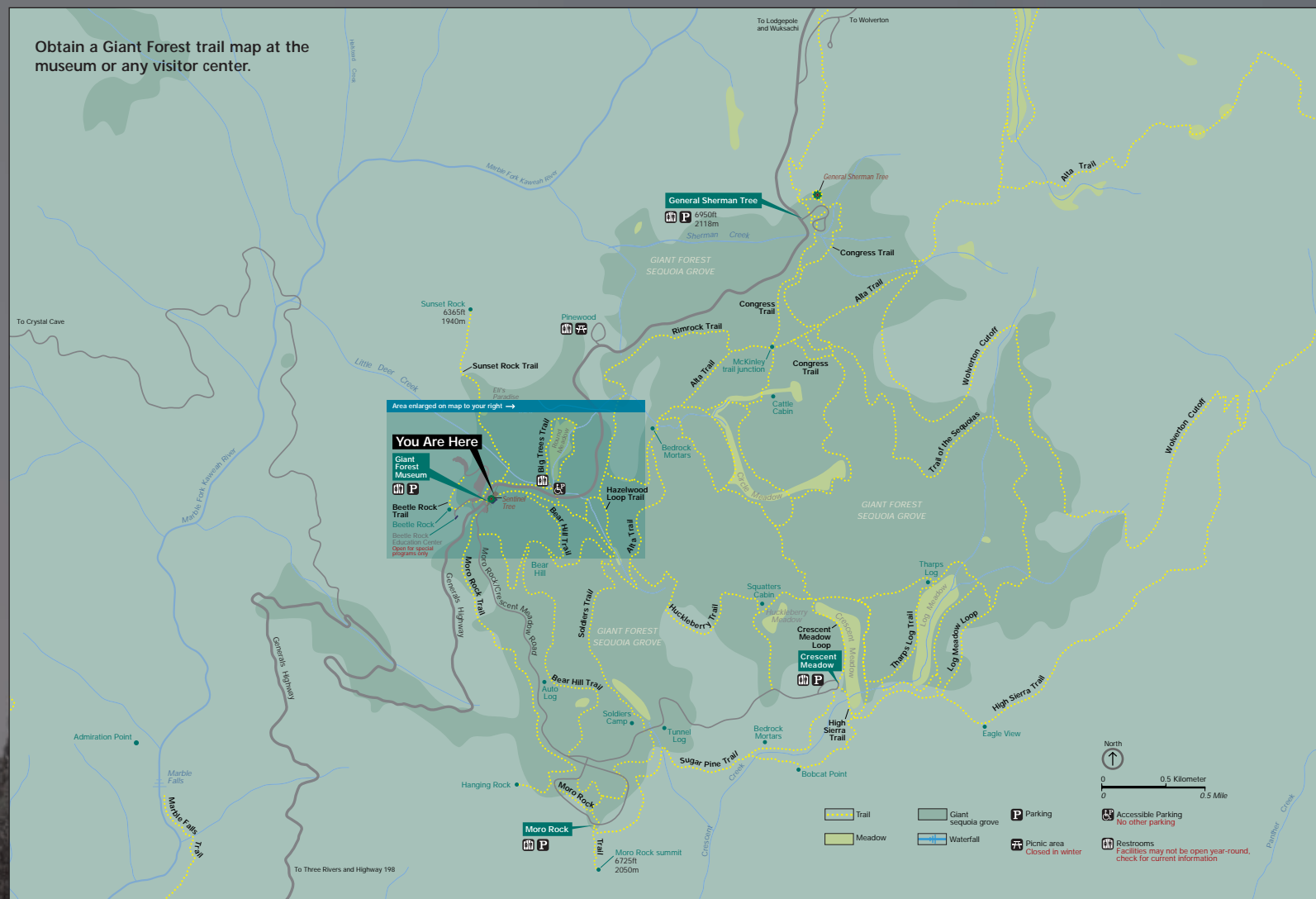
Examine why sequoias grow along the Big Trees Trail. See giant trees towering over a forest meadow.



Giant Forest Trails

The best way to see the sequoias of Giant Forest is on a trail. A network of footpaths offers an intimate look at the grove, from spectacular Moro Rock to the tiniest flower nestled beneath a giant sequoia. Spend as much time exploring these trails as you can.

Many sequoia enthusiasts claim that the Giant Forest's three square miles are home to the best of all sequoia groves. If the criterion is tree size, they are correct. Giant Forest hosts four of the world's five largest trees.



Protecting Giant Forest

Stay on trails.
Shortcutting damages the sequoia habitat.

Carry out all trash.

Do not feed nor approach wildlife.

All pets are prohibited on park trails.
Most trails in Giant Forest are closed to stock.

Park trails are closed to wheeled vehicles.

Smoking is discouraged on the trails.
If you must smoke, stop and do so safely.
Carry out all cigarette butts and matches.

Overnight camping is prohibited in Giant Forest.

Leave all natural objects in the park undisturbed.
Please do not take sequoia cones or other items, nor disturb wildlife or plants.

Protecting Yourself

All natural areas pose risk.
You are responsible for your own safety.

Carry a map and know how to use it.
It is best not to walk alone.
If you do, tell someone your plans.

Don't overexert yourself.
At this elevation of 6,400 feet (1950 m), activities take extra effort.

Watch for uneven or slippery footing.
Be very cautious around steep dropoffs and wet areas.

If you encounter a bear or cougar, don't run.
Stand tall and back away slowly. Pick up small children. For details about bears and cougars, obtain a free park newspaper.

Be aware of what's around you and overhead.
Tree limbs can fall without warning.

Be careful when crossing roads.
Don't walk in roadways. Use the trails.

Through the Giant Forest run many miles of safe and easy trails.... You are now entering the greatest forest in the world.... Don't leave until you have seen it and this you cannot do from an automobile.

Colonel John R. White
Park Superintendent, 1920s



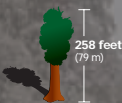
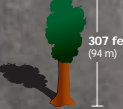
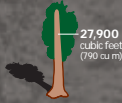




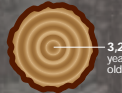


The Sentinel: Just Average?

If you think the giant tree in front of you is big, in one sense you are right. The Sentinel, a 2,200-year-old sequoia, is a monster—compared to most trees. But in this land of giants, the Sentinel is just average. In the grove of sequoias that surrounds you, some trees are nearly twice as large as the Sentinel.

At 700 tons (635 m tons) the Sentinel Tree weighs more than two fully loaded jumbo jet airplanes—yet it is still just an average sequoia tree.

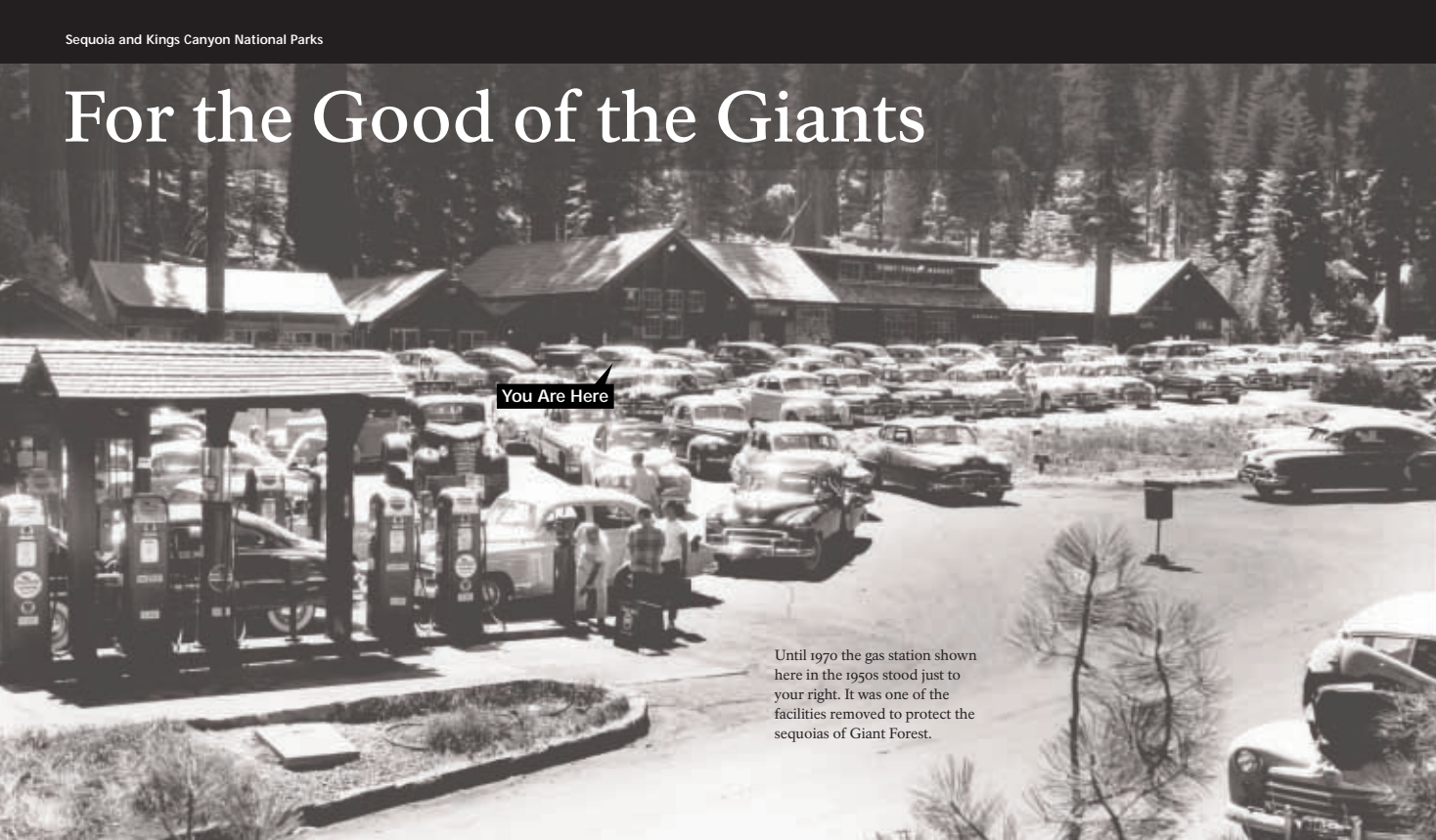
Compare for Yourself

	<i>The Sentinel Tree</i>	<i>Maximum Known</i>
Base Width	28 feet (9 m) 	40 feet (12 m) 
Height	258 feet (79 m) 	307 feet (94 m) 
Volume	Sequoias are the world's largest trees, due to the volume of their trunks. Other trees grow taller or have greater width, but none has greater volume. 27,900 cubic feet (790 cu m) 	52,500 cubic feet (1,487 cu m) 
Weight	700 tons (635 m tons) 	1,385 tons (1,256 m tons) 
Age	2,200 years old 	3,200 years old 

To see the largest sequoia tree—in fact, the largest tree on Earth—visit the General Sherman Tree just two miles (3.2 km) north of here.



For the Good of the Giants



You Are Here

Until 1970 the gas station shown here in the 1950s stood just to your right. It was one of the facilities removed to protect the sequoias of Giant Forest.

Try to imagine yourself standing here in the 1950s. You would have been surrounded by cars. Engine noise and exhaust would have overridden your impressions of the giant trees. Almost 100 cabins and motel units would have faced you from across the road.

Development in the Giant Forest began long ago. As early as the 1890s people began building here. Campgrounds, hotels, shops, a post office, park headquarters, parking lots, a gas station, and a sewage treatment plant all stood on the roots of the sequoias.

Over time, people recognized the damage being done to the grove's ecology and beauty. In the 1970s the park began to move services to less sensitive areas. In 1999 the last buildings came down.

Today, the only facilities left here are those dedicated to one thing — helping you learn about the giant sequoias.